

Hearing without Doing, not sufficient to Salvation :

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

Evening-Lecture

In Lime-Street, Sept. 29th. 1706.

B Y

JABEZ EARLE.

At his leaving the said Lecture.

Mat. vii. 24, 25, 26, 27. *Therefore whosoever beareth these Sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a Wise Man, which built his House upon a Rock, &c.*

Gal. vi. 7, 8, 9. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For what a Man soweth, that shall he also reap, &c.*

L O N D O N :

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THE
OF

MEMOIR

OF
THE
LIFE

OF
JAMES EARLE

BY
JAMES EARLE

IN TWO VOLUMES
BY
JAMES EARLE

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To the Encouragers of the Evening-Lecture in Lime- Street.

Gentlemen,

YOUR Request has oblig'd this plain Discourse to appear in the World, and submit it self to the Censure of such as will give themselves the Trouble to read it. If it may be of any Service to Souls, I have my End, and I hope you have yours. In the Course of my Preaching I have given you Encouragement to expect nothing from me, but what I judge to be the Truth of God, propos'd in a plain and familiar Dress. And the Circumstances that call'd for this Sermon seem'd more peculiarly to require that the Subject should be important, and the Management serious.

I am oblig'd by my Profession to be a Lover of Souls, and by the Relation in which I have stood to you, and the Kindness you have express'd to me, to be tenderly concern'd for Yours; and I am sure I would give you better Advice at Parting if I

The Dedication.

I shall only add to what I have said in the Sermon, a few Things that may be of particular Service as You are Younger People, and a Lecture. As to the former: Be sober minded; remember that humble
Tit. 2. 6. *Thoughtes of your own Understandings, and the strictest Guard of your Senses and Passions is highly needful and most becoming.*

Beware of an Enchanting World. Don't expect too much, don't pursue too vehemently, be timely convinc'd by Scripture and other Men's Experience of what the Event will sadly shew, that the
Eccles. 1. *World is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

Watch particularly against the inordinate Love of Ease and Pleasure. Here I reckon lies your greatest Danger. Inure your selves to Labour and Self-denial, and tremble to be found among those at last
2 Tim. 3. 4. *that are Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God.*

Take the utmost Care of your Company. Fly the Society of those whose Principles or Practices are corrupt. I mean contract no Intimacy with such Men. Where real Business calls, you must follow, under the Protection of Divine Grace. But I beseech you never make
make *am Bosom-Friends, nor Companions of*
your

The Dedication.

your innocent Pleasures. In the latter Instance I am most apprehensive. When ever you see it necessary to relax and divert, do it under the Guard of suitable Company. A Liberal Glass has often been the Vehicle of Spiritual Poyson. And its no Wonder to find the Contagion seize us upon too great Freedom with infected Persons.

Keep up a Regular Course of private Devotion. Don't let Business prevent you in the Morning, nor Company in the Evening. An unfrequented Closet will make a barren Soul.

Be diligent in your Callings; particularly you that are Servants, that Religion may not suffer, as an Encourager of Idleness, by the Just Complaint of your Family, or those you serve. Be not Slothful in Business; Adorn the Doctrine Rom. 12. 11. Tit. 2. 10. of God your Saviour in all Things.

Don't set Death and Judgment at too great a Distance. This is the Ruin of Thousands; They put far from them the Evil Day, and while it is at a Distance in their Imaginations, it often surprizes them unprovided: Or if they live, they contract a Habit of delaying, that follows 'em to Old Age, and makes them ridiculously put off still, as tho' they expected in the Literal Sense, to

renew

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renew their Youth. Oh! Remember now is the accepted Time; don't put off necessary Work to an Uncertain Futurity. Putting it off for a Day may be putting it off for Ever.

As you are a Society, I beg Leave to advise you Two or Three Things.

Don't neglect the Stated Ministry you are under upon the Account of your Evening Opportunities. All the Day is the Lord's. And it would be much to the Disgrace of Evening-Lectures in general, if for their sake you should neglect the Ordinary Seasons of Worship: This is a Free-will Offering, an Extraordinary Sacrifice, which was never allow'd to put by a stated one.

Don't let this intrench upon Family or Closet Worship. If due Prudence can't make both consist (as it might with many, and I hope does with you) you had much better omit This than Them.

Have a Care that By-Ends don't sway you; and that you cover nothing base, nothing secular, under the fair Pretence of multiply'd Devotions. The Eyes of the World will be upon you, and the Eye of God is so: Your Miscarriage will be of greater Scandal and higher Guilt than that of others.

After all, see that ye do not neglect Church-Communion; Renew your Baptis-

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mal Covenant, and make a Personal Surrender of your selves to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and avow him to be your God by the solemn Rite of the Lord's Supper, a Plain and express Command of Christ as any in the Bible, tho' scandalously neglected by many of those who seem to shew a Regard to other Precepts and Appointments.

I shall Conclude with my Hearty Thanks for the Opportunity of Service I have had among you, and the Encouragement you have given me; and Hearty Prayers that you may all Grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Christ, under your plentiful Means, and at last Meet together in the General Assembly of the Just. This is what becomes Him to wish and pray, who is

Gentlemen,

Your most Oblig'd Faithful

Servant, and Soul's Friend,

J. E.

The Dedication.

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 of Christ, unto your spiritual Maturity; and
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 sment of the Staff. This is what I come to
 wish and pray, now is

Gentlemen,

Your most Obedient Servant

and Soul's Friend

J. E.

JAMES I. 22.

*But be ye Doers of the Word, not
Hearers only, deceiving your own
selves.*

IN the foregoing Verse the Apo-
stle exhorts to *receive with Meek-
ness the Ingrafted Word*; upon this
Consideration, that it is *able to save
our Souls.*

These Words are added to direct
our Expectations, and prevent our
fancying that the meer hearing of
the Word will avail to that Blessed
End, if it be not admitted to guide
our Practice and govern our Lives.
But be ye Doers, &c. q. d. Tho' the
Word be a *Word of Life*, and *able to
save your Souls*, yet you'll be miserably
mistaken if you imagine this Effect
will issue upon any Regard to it,

B

short

short of a sincere Compliance with the Precepts it contains.

Now it is of the last Consequence to those that sit at the Feet of them that dispense the Everlasting Gospel, to be duly appriz'd of this Matter, lest they fall from exalted Expectations into the lowest Hell, and wake at last out of a pleasing Dream into unutterable Horrors, which will infallibly be the Case of such as know their Master's Will and do it not.

Knowing therefore the Terrors of the Lord, we persuade Men. It must needs affect us to think, how many constant Hearers are gone from our Worshipping Assemblies to the wretched Society of Devils, with whom they are blaspheming God, by reason of their Plagues; and roaring out under the unsufferable Weight of Almighty Vengeance, for despising the Orde of that Gospel, the Preaching of which they so diligently attended.

We

We must needs tremble at the View of a Crowded Auditory, when we have so much Reason to be apprehensive lest many of them who seem devout and serious Hearers, should be rejected at last, as *Workers of Iniquity!*

This can be prevented no other Way but by your doing the Word you hear; and therefore how can I spend the Time before me upon *this Occasion*, better than in engaging your Thoughts upon so awful a Subject? Which I shall by God's Help, attempt in the Method following.

I. I would consider that doing of the Word which is the Indispensible Duty of every one that hears it.

II. Consider that bare Hearing which Men would fain substitute in the Room of Doing.

III. Enquire whence it comes to pass, that Men should ever deceive them-

themselves with such a vain Imagination.

IV. Demonstrate the Vanity of this Conceit, and shew that such Expectations will be certainly frustrated.

V. Apply.

I. I am to consider, that *Doing of the Word*, which is the Indispensible Duty of every one that hears it. The General Import of this Expression is obvious enough. To be a Doer of the Word is to comply with the Precepts it enjoyns, to be a *Doer of the Work* as it is, *V. 25*. In our Lord's own Words, *Mat. 28. 20. To observe whatsoever he commands us.*

You cannot here expect that I should enter into the Detail of Particulars: It's the Business of our Lives to instruct you in the Way of God's Commandments, which are

*exceeding Broad; and when we have
 done our utmost, we can never so
 dilate as to exhaust the Subject. I
 hope I have not shunn'd to de-
 clare unto you the whole Counsel of God.
 It has been my sincere Endeavour,
 in all my Discourses, to
 teach you what is good, Micah 6. 8.
 and what the Lord re-
 quires of you. I shall now only men-
 tion a few comprehensive
 Scriptures to stir up your Joh. 6. 28.
 Minds by Way of Remem-
 brance. Our Lord's Hearers ask him,
 What shall we do that we might work
 the Works of God? They were sensi-
 ble that bare Hearing would not
 avail to their Salvation; and to their
 reasonable Enquiry upon that Mat-
 ter, Christ answers, *This is the Work* L
*of God, that ye believe in him whom
 he has sent.* This we may take as
 the Substance of Christianity. In
 another Place he gives us the Sum-
 mary of the Moral Law. When one
 ask'd him, Master, which is the great*

Commandment of the Law?

Mat. 22. 36.

Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; this is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. Agreeable to this is that of the Apostle, Tit. 2. 12, &c. The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World, looking for that blessed Hope, &c. Here is the Duty of the Law set upon its proper Basis; VIZ. Faith in the Blessed Jesus. To live soberly, righteously, and godly, with an Eye to that Jesus who died for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, is that Gospel Obedience to which we are under

under such Obligations as no Power can dispense with.

But tho' I pass over the Object of this Duty in so general Terms, I must be more particular as to the manner of it; because it is not every thing that may be call'd Doing the Word, will answer a saving End, or correspond to God's Expectations from us. That Obedience to the Word which is connected with Happiness, has these Essential Properties.

1. It flows from a sincere Regard to God. We must obey because God commands; That God whose Majesty we dread, whose Authority we reverence, and whose Grace we adore; to do what God would have us, for that very Reason because he would have us, is absolutely necessary to acceptable Service. How rich soever our Offerings be, he will always reject and abhor where there's Room for that Expostulation, *Did you do it at all* Zac. 1. 7.

unto me, even unto me. Upon this Account it is that the Apostle lays so vast a Stress upon Charity (or Love to God.) Tho' I ^{1 Cor. 13. 1.} speak (says he) with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as a sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And after having shewn the Insufficiency of even Spiritual and Miraculous Gifts without Charity, he proceeds to pass the same Censure upon a great deal of that which may be call'd Duty and Doing, and would make a very Pompous Appearance in the World: For he adds, Tho' I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing. The Sum of all is plainly this, that what-
ever

ever a Man does in Religion from any other Principle than that of a sincere Regard to God, will prove worthless and unavailing. *The Desire of a Man* Prov. 19. 22.

is his Kindness. 'Tis so among Men, and 'tis so in God's Account. *Is thy Heart*

right as my Heart is with 2 Kings 10. 15.

thy Heart? was the Question which Jehu put to his Friend Jehonadab. So 'tis the Heart God expects; and if there be a

willing Mind it is accepted 2 Cor. 8. 12.

not according to what a Man hath not, but according to what he hath. From whence it hath been piously observ'd, " That tho' God

" oftentimes accepts the Will without the Deed, he never accepts the Deed without the Will.

2. It is *Impartial*, and without Reserve. Indeed God does not expect perfect Obedience in this World, but yet an acceptable Doer

of his Word must have re-
 spect to all his Command-
 ments, must except against
 none, nor indulge himself in the neg-
 lect of any thing that God has made
 his Duty. It's the Character of a
 Hypocrite to be Partial in
 God's Law. And our A-
 postle sets this Matter in a
 clear Light; Chap. 2, v. 10, 11, &c.
*Whosoever shall keep the whole Law,
 and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty
 of all.* And he gives the Reason of
 so severe a Censure in the following
 Verse. *He that hath said do not com-
 mit Adultery, said also do not kill,
 &c.* We must therefore have a
 Conscientious Regard to Natural
 and Positive Laws, first and second
 Table Dutys, if we would please
 him who requires of us to
 Micah. 6. 8. *do justly, and to love Mercy,
 and walk humbly with our
 God.* It's impious Mockery to com-
 pound for the Neglect of one Duty,
 by Exactness and Abundance in ano-
 ther;

ther, as tho' the Holy God might be put off with a barren Faith, or Phariſaical Righteouſneſs, in ſpight of his poſitive and repeated Declarations to the contrary. He can never have a due Regard to the Authority of the Law-givers that man-gles the Law at his own Pleaſure. He that will obey but as himſelf pleaſes, affronts the Sovereign he pretends to own, and Traiterouſly exalts himſelf by aſſuming a diſpenſing Power, and making himſelf ſuperior to that Law which ſhould govern him.

3. It is *Conſtant, Habitual, and Perſevering*. *Bleſſed is he that doth Righteouſneſs at all times.* There muſt be a patient continuing in well doing. *He that endures to the End ſhall be ſaved.* And in due time we ſhall reap if we faint not. Therefore he that obeys but when he pleaſes, is much ſuch a Servant as he that does but what he pleaſes.

pleases. He brings forth fruit to himself being govern'd by his own uncertain Fancy, not by the Word of God, which lieth and abideth for ever.

Our Goodness therefore must not be like the Morning Cloud, or early Dew, that goeth away: It should be as a Living Spring whose Waters fail not; or as the shining Light that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day.

4. It is an Evangelical Obedience, i. e. upon Gospel Principles, and agreeable to the Gospel Constitution.

The Love of Christ must constrain us. We must act under the Influences of his Spirit, and not think to furnish out a Holy Conversation in our own Strength. No, we

must be strengthened with Might by his Spirit in the Inward Man. According to that of the Apostle Paul, I live, get not I, but Christ liveth

in me. We must see that we be rooted and built up in him, or else our Fruit will be wild, and our Structure rotten. We must also take care that our Obedience keep its proper Place; that we don't exalt it into the Room of our Redeemer's Righteousness; always remembering that in him we have Righteousness and Strength, that He of God is made unto us Righteousness, and that by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh living be justified. And with this Caution we can never apply our selves too zealously to Duty, nor entertain too high and honourable Thoughts of a Personal Righteousness, which how much soever it be depreciated when it presumes to compare with the Righteousness of Christ, is yet in every single Branch of it in the sight of God of great Price. Insomuch that an Irreversible Decree has made it necessary to our Salvation, and Heaven

it self shall sooner pass away than any unholy Soul be admitted into it. *Without Holiness no*

Heb. 12. 14. Man shall see the Lord.

Rev. 22. 14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, &c. For without are Dogs, &c. These and a Thousand Scriptures more bear Testimony to the Reputation of that Gospel Holiness, which some reject as Duty, and others scorn as Evangelical.

II. I am to consider that *Hearing* which many would fain substitute in the Room of *Doing*, and have supply the Place of that Obedience I have been describing. And that I may deal the more effectually with such unhappy Self-deceivers, I shall give their Plea all the Advantage I can, and consider meer *Hearing* with all its most plausible Circumstances, that Men may be prevailed with not to lean upon this *Staff of a broken Reed*, which will not only fail, but

but enter into their Souls, and pierce
 'em. And here;

I. Hearing alone will not avail
 to saving Purposes, tho' the Word
 be dispens'd with the greatest *Puri-
 ty, Plainness, Zeal and Fervour* ima-
 ginable. We are indeed to choose
 those for our Spiritual Guides whom
 we apprehend best qualify'd for that
 Awful Work, and their Gifts best
 suited to our Edification; but this
 alone is far from being sufficient to
 our Salvation. Tho' our Minister be
 a *Boanerges, a Son of Thunder, or a
 Barnabas, a Son of Consolation*; Tho'
 he be an *Apollos, Eloquent and migh-
 ty in the Scriptures*, his Qualifications
 may aggravate, but not prevent our
 Damnation, if we be unperswadable
 and disobedient. St. Paul preach'd
 to many that *contradicted
 and blasphemed*, and so *Acs 13. 45.
 2 Cor. 2. 16.*
 was to them *the savour
 of Death unto Death*. Yea, the bles-
 sed Jesus himself's the
true and faithful Witness, *Heb. 9. 9.*

will

will be the Author of Eternal Sa'va-
tion only to them that obey him: And
accordingly he sends away those (as
Workers of Iniquity) that
Luke 13. 26. could say, *We have eaten
and drank in thy Presence,
and thou hast taught in our Streets.*
Now, if the Excellency of the
Preacher could save the Hearers
without Doing, certainly those had
the best Hopes that heard the Voice
of the blessed Jesus himself, *who
spake as never Man spake.* But we
see their Disappointment, let that
be our Caution.

2. Hearing only will not save our
Souls, tho' we attend to it with the
utmost *Constancy and Frequency* that
our Circumstances will admit. How
statedly and how often soever we
hear, we shall be lost forever, if we
only hear. Tho' we hear *in season
and out of season*, tho' we take never
so much Pains, run never so great
Hazards, go from Sea to Sea to seek
the Word, and venture our own
best

best Blood to get the sincere Milk of the Word, yet if we only hear, our Labour's lost, and worse than lost, and so it will be.

3. Tho' we hear with never so much *Attention and Diligence*. It is our Duty indeed to attend with the utmost Application; and they are very Criminal who draw nigh to God with their Bodys, when their Hearts are abroad in the World. But it's not enough barely to hear, tho' never so attentively. Tho' we hang upon the Preacher's Lips, and catch every flowing Word, this will never supply the Place of Conscientious Obedience. Nor,

4. Tho' we hear with never so much *Understanding*. Indeed it's our Duty to hear and understand, but Knowledge sepearte from Practice will never save us. If ye know these Things, happy are ye if you do them. See to this Purpose, Rom. 2. 17, 18, 19. *Or*. Ignorance is sometimes admitted as an Excuse, but

but what Effrontery is it to plead our Connivance of the Law against an Indictment for breaking it?

5. Hearing alone will not save us, tho' we Remember what we hear. I confess it's our Duty to remember what we can, and a Happiness to be able to retain much; and yet a Man may be able to repeat a Sermon Word for Word, and after all be a forgetful Hearer, because not a Doer. See *Ver. 25.* A Faithful Memory and an Honest Heart are two Things, and very often found asunder. The Priests and Pharisees could say, *We remember Mat 27, 63. what this Deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three Days I will rise again,* and yet we none of us envy their Portion. There's many a one gone down to the Place of Darknes and Horror, with his Head full of Gospel-light, and his Memory full of Gospel-Sermons.

6. Nor will Hearing alone avail, tho'

tho' it be with great *Delight* and *Pleasure*, *Herod* heard *John* gladly, which yet would not compensate for his incestuous Conversation with *Herodias*. And *Ezekiel's* Hearers attended to him, as a very lovely Song; and yet this was their Condemnation, That they heard his Words, but did *Ex. 33. 32.* them not. Men may love to hear upon a Thousand foreign Accounts, and yet hate to be reformed, and so be lost for ever. As we may,

7. Tho' we hear with never so strong *Convictions*. The Word which *Paul* preach'd made *Felix* tremble: But tho' the Rock was shook it did not melt, and the Case is sadly common. How many Thousands have shook, and sweat, and wept under Sermons, and yet have gone on still in their *Trespasses*, and been plung'd in *Eternal Perdition*? So again,

8. Tho' we hear with never so good

good Purposes and Resolutions. These are indeed our Duty, and a hopeful Step to saving Benefit by the Word, but they often prove Abortive. These Blossoms never knit into Fruit, and many a one has promis'd thus fair that has at last been cut down as cumbring the Ground, and cast into the Fire. Christ has taught us the Character of that Son that said, *I go Sir, but went not.* And it was the Language once of those harden'd Wretches, whose Carcasses fell in the Wilderness; *Exod. 19. 8. All that the Lord hath said unto us, we will do.*

III. I am to enquire whence it comes to pass that ever Men should deceive themselves with such a vain Imagination as this is, That Men should thus impose upon themselves with Sophistical Arguments. (as the Original Word imports) And here,

1. If Men have really such a *formed Apprehension*, (as some tell us many of the *Jews* had) it must be the Effect of gross Ignorance. Such Hearers must needs be perfectly ignorant of the God they pretend to worship, of the Nature of their own Souls, that Salvation they expect, and the very Tenor and Purport of they hear; as I may have occasion to shew more fully in its proper Place. But I can hardly suppose Men capable of such a ridiculous Thought: And therefore,

2. The Generality at least, of bare Hearers, only declare this *practically*. (as the *Fool says in his Heart, there is no God.* *Psal.* 14. 1. He is practically an Atheist, because he lives as if there were none.) And then this must be imputed to the Power of their own Lusts, supported by the Agency of the Devil. They are as it were enchanted and bewitch'd, under an Infatuation, or sort of Distraction; and

and tho' they have Reason, the Act and Exercise of it is for the Time suspended.

The Matter is so unaccountable that I shall dismiss it with only this Remark. That if Men do really think that meer Hearing will supply the Place of Doing, they are *Weak* to a Wonder. If they know better, and yet act as if this were their Judgment, they are *distracted*, or something worse that I han't a Name for!

IV. I am to *prove the Vanity* of the Conceit, &c. And to all that I have already said under the Two former Heads, I shall add some more direct and form'd Arguments. And here,

1. I shall argue from the *Nature and Perfections* of God: A true Notion of them must be admitted, to regulate all our Conceptions in Matters of Religion. Nothing can be true that is not agreeable to the whole

whole Account he has given us of himself: Yea, whatever cannot be reconcil'd to any one of his Attributes, is indisputably false. Nor can we believe any thing that we apprehend to cast a Star upon any of his Perfections, tho' that Apprehension be founded upon Mistake. Our Notion must first be rectify'd before our Assent can be demanded. Now upon this Supposition, how vain a Fancy must that be which would substitute meer Hearing in the Room of Doing? Consider this, and shew your selves Men! Can an All-knowing, Heart-searching God be deceived? Can vain Man that is born like the wild Asses Colt, possibly impose upon him whose Understanding is Infinite? Is it to be suppos'd that he can't distinguish between Ceremony and Obedience? Or that the subtlest Cheat upon Earth can pass upon him Shadow for Substance, Words for Action, or Bodily Exercise for Inward Godliness, and a Regular Con-

Conversation? Or will a *Jealous* God be mock'd? Shall a daring Worm be suffer'd to banter him to his Face, and go unpunish'd? Will the *Justice* of God endure that a *Deceiver* should have in his Flock a Male, and vow and sacrifice to the Lord a corrupt thing? Offer it to an Earthly Governour, and judge in this Case by his Resentments. *I will ascribe Righteousness to my Maker.* And can I then imagine that he who is to judge the World, and render every Man according to his Works, will ever award the same Thing to Doers and Hearers, and put no difference between him that knows his Will and him that did it? Consider seriously, can the *Holy* God be suppos'd to take Pleasure in a vile Sinner, meerly because he attends his Worship, and mingles with his People? Would it alter the Nature of a Goat if he should fold among Sheep? Or a false Diamond to be well set? I

am ashamed to pursue the Argument. Oh! what Notions must these Men have of God, that can entertain such a Fancy? Or, what a God must he be if they are in the right? But I Argue,

2. From the *Nature* of our own *Souls*. If we had no other Facultys but what enabled us to hear, and know, and wish, and purpose, &c. we might expect that God would require only according to what he gave. But to what purpose is an *Executive Power*, and Power of acting agreeably to the Dictate of our Minds, if meer Hearing, under what Circumstances soever, were sufficient to answer the End of our Creation? At this rate God has given us Facultys in vain, &c. But to pursue that Absurdity would lead me back to the former Argument. And therefore,

3. I argue from the *Nature* of that *Salvation* we expect. He knows nothing of Salvation or Happiness
 C that

that does not look upon Holiness
Essentially Ingredient to it. For a
reasonable Creature to be happy is
to have the Image of God renew'd
upon his Soul, to be Partaker of the
Divine Nature: To have
transforming Views of his
Glory: *To be like him,*
by seeing him as he is, &c. The Work
and Happiness of Heaven is to be
always in the Presence of God,
tasting his Love, doing his Will,
and singing his Praise. Now, for
any to think they can be thus happy
without Holiness, is the wildest Im-
agination in the World. Either
Men must own the Necessity of Ho-
liness to Happiness, or they must
find out some other Heaven than
the Scripture is acquainted with;
for their Hopes are founded upon
this wretched Supposition, that they
may be saved without Salvation:
A Contradiction which I need not
expose.

4. From

8. From the *Constant Tenour of the Word* we hear. Hence the Argument is obvious enough: Either the Word you hear is true or false; if false why do you hear it? If true, why don't you believe it? If you say you do believe it, let me ask you, Is there any thing plainer in it than the Necessity of Obedience, or doing the Will of God? Did you ever hear a Sermon in your Lives that had not some Reference to Practice? We can appeal to your Consciences, that whatever has been the Subject of our Preaching, we have always had this visible Aim, to better your Hearts, and regulate your Lives: Herein following the Example of our Blessed Lord, all whose Sermons were to direct Men's Practice. His first Sermon is in a manner one continued Exhortation; and at the Conclusion of it he has this remarkable Passage, Mat 7. 24. *Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine and doth them, I will li-*

ken him to a wise Man which built his House upon a Rock. And every one that heareth these Sayings of mine and doth them not, shall be liken'd to a foolish Man which built his House upon the Sand. Accordingly it is observable that the great Gospel Preacher, St. Paul, concludes all his Epistles with Practical Inferences from the Truth he had deliver'd. And this Example of his we all follow; but sure our Applications are strangely Impertinent, if bare Hearing be all your Duty! Which we may be sure can't be.

5. From the Declar'd Sense of him that is to judge Men another Day, and fix their Eternal State. Our blessed Redeemer has told us that it's only the Doers of his Father's Will shall be admitted into Heaven. *Mat. 7. 21.* *Not every one that saith unto me Lord! Lord! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And he takes Notice of such Impertinent Pleas

I have been mentioning. Many will say unto me in that Day, Lord have we not prophesied in thy Name, &c? Then will I profess unto them I never knew you. And sure he best knows upon what Terms we are to be admitted into his own Glory.

(6) I may argue from the Insufficiency of something that goes beyond bare Hearing, with all the Advantageous Circumstances I have mentioned, and that is partial Obedience. Now if there be an Obedience, a Doing the Word that will not avail to the Salvation of the Soul, (as I have shew'd at large) meer Hearing, which falls short of that, must needs be insufficient. Shall the greater be rejected and the less accepted? If he that could say, *All these have I kept from my Youth*, miscaray'd, because he lack'd one thing, if many a Man whose Conversation is outwardly Regular shall be cast out at last, where shall they appear whose Righteousness does not come up to that

that of the Scribes and Pharisees?
See Mar. 9. 30.

7. I might argue from the Report
of unprejudic'd Reason and awakened
Conscience. Particularly, in the Case
of Dying People. We are apt to
judge impartially, when thro' the
Weakness of Decaying Nature, sen-
sible Objects strike more faintly, and
the Soul begins to be disentagl'd
from Worldly Incumbrances. And
it is notorious how feelingly Men
are then wont to bewail their Neg-
lect of Obedience to the Word,
which they have perhaps very dili-
gently heard. They then see thro'
all the Sophistical Pretences, by
which they were before willingly
impos'd upon; and if they liv'd in
a Course of wilful Disobedience,
can never take Comfort in the Re-
view of a past Life. They then pur-
pose and promise, if God shall spare
em, to spend the Remzinder of
their Days in his Faithful Service,
and to be fill'd with the Fruit of
Righ-

Righteousness. Yea, this is the Sense of the Best of Men; who tho' they may have no Melancholy Apprehensions, as to their Future State, having built their Hopes upon the *Rock of Ages*, and Anchor'd their Souls upon the Merits of a Redeemer; and to all this have the Testimony of their Conscience, that they *have not departed wickedly from their God*: Yet when Psal. 18. 21. they come to die, are deeply humbled under a Sense of their Unprofitableness and Disobedience; and are ready to spend their last Breath, as one of the best Saints upon Earth. *A. B. Usher.* did, saying, "Lord, forgive my Sins of Omission. Yea, to conclude where the *Publican* began, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.* Now the Sense of Dying Men has always commanded Reverence, and I hope shall be allow'd to have its Weight in the present Case. However, its brought in but as an Auxiliary, and the

the Truth will stand without it. In like manner,

- Lastly, I might argue from the Prayers of these very Men themselves, who beg the Grace of God and Influences of his Spirit somewhat unaccountably, if they have no Duty incumbent, no Work to do. Yea, impiously trifle in imploring the Divine Assistance, when they have no Occasion for it.

This may abundantly suffice to prove the Vanity of such Expectations as I have been considering. Yea, if I had aim'd merely to prove so obvious a Matter, I am sensible I had said too much! But Multiplicity of Arguments tends to impress as well as convince; and Men much more need to have Truths fasten'd upon their Hearts than clear'd to their Understandings: Which Consideration allows us, in Important Practical Matters, laboriously to prove what very few will formally deny.

deny. As I might instance in the great Truth of the Being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, &c.

IV. I am to Apply the Truth asserted. And here,

21. If Hearing without Doing is insufficient to Salvation, what must be the Case of those who will not *for much more safe to hear?* That when they should be attending the Ordinances of God's Worship, are sleeping upon their Beds, doytering in their Houses, walking in the Fields, or contriving for the World; and perhaps worse employ'd than so, consecrating the Lord's Day to the Devil's Service; and *treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath,* when they should be *working out their own Salvation.* What must be the Doom of those who won't give the Ambassadors of Heaven the Hearing, but *say to the Almighty depart us, we* Job 21. 14. *desire not the Knowledge*

of thy Ways! A Man may hear and yet perish, but he that refuses to go so far, carries about him the visible Tokens of Reprobation.

a. What must be the Case of these whose Hearings fall short of that which I have represented as absolutely insufficient to Salvation? As particularly, *short of that*

Those who upon Choice hear *Blind Guides*, when the Providence of God offers 'em an Able Ministry. Who choose to be under the Conduct of such as will *Prophecy smooth things*, and never disturb their sleepy Consciences with a loud and faithful Alarm, when they might enjoy the Blessing of such Teachers as would lift up their Voice as a Trumpet, and not spare to tell 'em the Truth, for fear of their Enmity.

And what must become of those who hear without Attention? who, instead of regarding the Voice of God that sounds from the Pulpit, are amus'd with the Dress and De-

ment

portment of the Auditors, and are as unconcern'd at the Business before 'em as the Seats they sit in, or the Ground they tread on.

Equally miserable must they be who hear but *understand not*; that neither know, nor strive to know the Things they hear: But after a long Course of Attendance upon the Preaching of the Word, are as ignorant as Children, and had need to be *taught which are the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* Heb 5. 12.

What will become of those who *never remember* what they hear, and that not thro' a natural Weakness of Memory, but a negligent and heedless Temper? That never treasure up the good Word, but let it slip, as tho' it were an impertinent Tale, and utterly insignificant to any serious Purposes.

And of those who hear without any *Inclination or Delight*, the Authority of Superiours, Education,
In-

Interest, &c. constrains 'em to give their Attendance: But at the same Time they cry, *Behold!* Mal. 2. 14. *what a weariness is it!* and with the Sabbath were over.

Finally, what shall we say of such as hear without any *Convictions* or *Resolutions*? that never startle at the *Thunder* of the Law, nor listen to the *Charms* of the Gospel, but are like the *deaf Adder*, utterly unimpress'd, and their Hearts harder than the *Nether Mill-stone*. If a Man may like *Agrippa*, believe the Scriptures, and be almost perswaded to be a *Christian*, and yet fail of the *Grace of God*; where shall such as these appear? If a Man may knock at *Heaven Gate* and yet be thrust down to *Hell*, it's easy to know their *Doom* who never ask the *Way to Zion*, nor set their *Faces thitherwards*.

2. We may here see the Reason why among Multitudes of Professors there

there are so few *Real Saints*; because Hearing is so much easier than Doing. Men may hear the Word at very little Expence, but can't practice it without more Application and Self-denial than Flesh and Blood will ever like. Its easier to hear a Thousand Sermons than renounce one Idol, mortify one Lust, or perform one Duty in *Spirit and in Truth*. Upon this Account the Gate is said to be *strait*, and the Way *narrow*; and no wonder if there be but few that find it.

Lastly, We may see what Reason Ministers have to press their Hearers to be *Doers* of the Word. This is the truest Evidence of our Love to People's Souls: And in this Method I choose to express my Affection to You of this *Lecture*. I thankfully acknowledge, You have been kind to me, and the best Return I can make, is to entreat You to be kind to your own Souls, in a particular Regard to the Word You have

have loved to hear. *Suffer therefore Brethren, the Word of Exhortation. Be Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, &c.* And let me add by Way of Motive.

1. If you are Hearers only, you'll certainly *lose* your Souls. You may flatter your selves with Hopes of Heaven; but as sure as Heaven is Heaven, or that there is a God in it, your Expectations will be frustrate, and your Hopes make you ashamed. What Character would you give that Man, that being bound to the *Indies*, should content himself with hearing a Lecture of Geography, or Navigation? Will attending a Discourse of Medicine or Anatomy, cure a Disease, or set a broken Bone? I wish Men would first make the ridiculous Experiment upon their vile Bodies, before they trifle so egregiously at the Expence of their precious Souls!

2. That Hearing from which you so fondly expect so much, will not
only

only disappoint your Hopes, but aggravate your Misery. The more Means you have of knowing your Master's Will, the more Stripes you must suffer for disobeying it. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you.

3. Your Ruin will lie at your own Doors; Deceiving your own selves. The Word of God says nothing to countenance such a wretched Mistake; and we the Ministers of that Word have the Testimony of our own Consciences, and appeal to yours; yea, call him to witness that is greater than our Hearts, that we have never said any thing to encourage such a Conceit. And I would once more, at parting, sound the Awful Alarm, and enter my solemn Protest against your taking up with any thing short of Practical Godliness; that if you will throw away

away your *own* Souls; I may at least deliver *mine*.

4. That *Doing God's Word*, which we urge, is no such *unpleasant Thing*, that you should make use of such unaccountable Sophistry to evade it. No Tongue can express the Pleasures of Holy Obedience! The Exercise of Love to God, and Faith in a Redeemer, Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Inward Tranquility of Soul, and sometimes inexpressible Exultations, in Prospect of Eternal Glory, afford a Pleasure which no *Stranger* intermeddles with. Yea, it's impossible to convey an *Idea* of these Things to unexperienc'd Minds. Yet to this Purpose is the Unanimous Profession of those who have practically known the *Truth as it is in Jesus*; avowing that there is more Real Pleasure even in Mortification, Self-denial, and suffering for Christ, than in any Worldly Enjoyment whatsoever; according to the Testimony

simony of the Fittest, because most
 Experienc'd Judge: Who has told
 us by the Spirit of God,
 that *All Wisdoms Ways are* Prov. 3. 17.
Pleasantness.

5. When we call upon you to do
 the Word you hear, we press you
 to nothing but what is possible and
 feasible. We know the present
 Frame of Human Nature too well
 to expect absolute Perfection in this
 Life: And we acknowledge that
 even Gospel Duty has its Difficul-
 ties; but what God expects is what
 you may perform, not in your own
 Strength but *his*. Under the Old
 Testament there was a
Noah, a just Man and per- Gen. 6. 9.
fect, who walk'd with God,
and was righteous before
him: A Caleb, who fol- Num. 14. 24.
low'd God fully: A Job, Job 1. 1.
who was perfect and up-
right, and feared God and eschew'd
Evil. The Time would fail to tell of
all

Heb. 11. 32, all those Worthies who
33. thro' Faith wrought Right-
eousness and obtain'd Pro-
mises.

Under the New Testament Dis-
pensation there have been vast Num-
bers of Holy Souls, who with Paul
have found God's Grace
2 Cor. 12. 9. sufficient for 'em, and could
Phil. 4. 13. do all things thro' Christ
Heb. 13. strengthening 'em Now,
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-
day and for ever. He has the Resi-
due of the Spirit, and will give it
to them that ask it. However,
make Trial, and see if you don't
find suitable Help! Can you expect
that a Plea of Disability should be
admitted against President and Pro-
mise, and without Trial too?

6. The Master, whose Will you
are called to do, is not implacable
or severe. He knows how to make
kind Allowances, and dispense Gra-
cious Pardons. There is
Psal. 130. 4. forgiveness with thee that
thou

thou mayst be feared. Let me add,

7. If you will not be Doers of the Word, you'll certainly wish you had. O my Friends, we foresee a black and gloomy Time, an Hour of Affliction, a Day of Death and Judgment, &c. in which you'll believe and tremble, as your Tempters the Devils do now. You'll believe then that Truth against which you may now perhaps rise up in Scorn and Indignation. You'll see thro' the vain Pretences that now deceive you, and find upon what a Sandy Foundation you built your Hopes, and sorely wish when 'tis too late, that you could say with the Apostle, *Our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of 2 Cor. i. 12. our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our Conversation in this World.*

Lastly, I shall only farther say, It is no Interest of our own we seek in this Matter. Our Temporal Interest may be as well serv'd by the
bare

bare Hearing ; and we are so satis-
 fy'd of this, that it's with the great-
 est Heaviness of Heart we some-
 times consider how many of the
 most Liberal Encouragers of the
 Gospel will *fail at last of the Grace*
 of it, and never enter into that
Rest that remains for the People of
God. And as to our Spiritual and
 Eternal Interest, tho' every Convert
 be our Crown and Joy, yet we have
 a Master whose Rewards are not
 dispens'd according to the Success
 we have, but the Dili-
 2 Cor. 2. 15. gence we give. *We are*
unto God a sweet savour of
Christ in them that perish. Tho' we
labour in vain, and spend
 Isa. 49. 4. *our strength for naught, yet*
our Judgment is with the
Lord, and our Work with our God.

I should now give some *Directi-*
ons to the willing Hearer, that
 would also be a Doer of the Word.
 I shall content my self to give you
 some few Hints.

Consider

Consider what has been said, and see if I have not fully prov'd the Insufficiency of bare Hearing to Salvation; and offer'd Motives to Duty that have their Weight.

Settle it upon your Minds that the Word you hear is God's: The signification of his Will constituting your Duty. Remember it is not our Word, but our Master's. *We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord.* 1 Cor. 4. 5. It will help incline you to obey, if you consider *who* commands.

Come to hear with a *Design* to do: Bring your selves to a Resolution, which is the next Step to actual Performance. Resolve in the Strength of Christ, that you will practice as well as hear. That you'll obey God and not mock him, feed your own Souls and not deceive em.

Often *reflect* and examine how you have heard. Think with your selves, I have been hearing the Word, what Impressions has it made?

What

What Convictions have I felt? What Resolutions have I form'd? Now my Soul, take Care to manage according to what thou hast been convinc'd is thy Duty, and resolv'd shall be thy Practice.

Lament your past Unprofitableness: Deep Repentance that you have heard so long in vain, will be a mighty Means to quicken you to Duty for Time to come. The shameful Remembrance of your past Trifling may be expected to make you double your Diligence.

Especially be much in *believing Views* of Unseen Realities. Set God, and Christ, and Judgment, and Heaven, and Hell before you; and you'll find that by holding your Minds close to these Objects your Hearts will warm, and those Affections take Fire, with which you'll *run the Ways of God's Commandments*.

Be particularly careful that you sit duly loose from the World, and bent

ben't too much embarras'd and incumber'd with it. Remember seriously *no Man can serve two Masters, God and Mammon*; while you are in full Pursuit of the Pleasures and Profits of this Life, you'll hardly be at Leisure to hear the Word, much less to do it.

Above all, Beg the *Spirit of God*; otherwise we speak in vain: Yea, so would an Angel too, if He should Sound a Trumpet in your Ears as loud as the last will be; otherwise you are convinc'd in Vain, resolve in Vain, and attempt in Vain. You must pray hard for the Spirit of Christ, without which you can never do his Will.

And now let me resume my Exhortation, *Be Doers, &c.* And Oh that I knew how to make it reach your Hearts! But I know Success is God's; and therefore shall only add, That I am so perswaded of the
Truth

Truth and Importance of what I
have offer'd, that I would leave it
with you, as my last Advice, if I
were to step out of this Pulpit into
Eternity.

in full Pursuit of the Pleasures
Promises of this Life, you'll hardly
be at Leisure to hear the Word,
much less to do it.

Above all, Beg the Spirit of God;

otherwise we speak in vain: Yea,
so would an Angel too, if He should
Sound a Trumpet in your Ears as
loud as the last will be; otherwise
you are conversing in Vain, resolve

FINIS.

in Vain, and attempt in Vain. You
must pray hard for the Spirit of
Christ, without which you can ne-
ver do his Will.

And now let me resume my Ex-
hortation, Be Devout, &c. And Oh
that I knew how to make it reach
your Hearts! But I know Success is
God's; and therefore shall only add,
That I am so persuaded of the
Truth

